

I'm voting for ... The marriage amendment

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Page: B5

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Want to persuade people to vote your way Submit up to 500 words about any issue on the November ballot. Please include a photo and some identifying information. Send essays to Steve Lund Editorial Page Editor Kenosha News 5800 Seventh Ave. Kenosha WI 53141 or via e mail to slund@kenoshanews.com. Deadline is 5:30 p.m. today

I'm voting for the Wisconsin Marriage Amendment. Those opposing it have spent millions propagating myths about the amendment. Here's the real story.

Myth 1: Wisconsin law already limits marriage to one man and one woman. The amendment is unnecessary.

Real Story: The first sentence is true, the second is not. The danger is that our current marriage laws will be struck down by the courts, just like in Massachusetts, Vermont, and most recently New Jersey. The reality is, judges in other states have shown a willingness to dispose of laws they find distasteful, imposing their moral preferences over those of the people. With a left-leaning Wisconsin Supreme Court, a lawsuit here is not far off.

Myth 2: Many "rights" will be taken away if the amendment passes.

Real Story: This is simply not true. Contrary to the claims of those opposing the amendment, no other state that has passed a marriage amendment has had any private contracts or other non-governmental benefit struck down. I concede that it is unclear whether some governmental programs that give domestic partner benefits on the basis of marriage-like statuses could be struck down. But this is an easy fix. Governmental entities wanting to preserve these benefits need merely change the basis for the benefits to something other than a marriage-like status. Make no mistake, this amendment will not affect private employers or private contracts. It only prohibits creating marriage-like "legal" statuses.

Myth 3: If marriage is good, it should be open to any two people who love each other.

Real Story: Put simply, marriage is by definition the union of one man and one woman. Let me get out in the open what most of us know to be true: Men and women were uniquely designed as complements for each other. Relationships between same sex partners are not equivalent to relationships between opposite sex couples. This is not bigotry or hate, just the truth.

Why you should vote YES for marriage on Nov. 7:

If the state regulates marriage at all, it must decide what marriage is. The real debate, then, is not whether moral views should be codified into our laws, but which moral views we should adopt.

If non-married persons want to obtain legal benefits, they may do so through private legal arrangements. But our state should not publicly sanction and support as marriage or marriage-like, those relationships that do not constitute a marriage.

Let's remember that this amendment was proposed as the antidote to reckless court decisions in places like Vermont in 2000 and Massachusetts in 2003. The first sentence of the amendment prevents a Massachusetts: judicially imposed same-sex marriage. The second sentence prevents a Vermont: Judicially imposed marriage-lite.

We are a nation deeply divided over how the state ought to treat homosexual relationships. By voting yes on the amendment, we can preserve the institution of marriage in Wisconsin for years to come, and foreclose the option of having four robed lawyers in Madison decide these important questions for us.

Vote YES on Nov. 7.